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FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT (FED) PROGRAM FOR LIBERIA

MONTHLY REPORT: AUGUST 2014



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Photo Caption: Transplanted fields at Garmu #1 seed multiplication site, Panta District, Bong County. USAID FED rice farmers transplanted a total of 1,181.52 ha of lowland rice fields in August.

DISCLAIMER

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

Acronyms

AEDE	Agency for Economic Development and Empowerment
APDRA	Association Pisciculture et Development Rural en Afrique
AVTP	Accelerated Vocational Training Program
AYP	Advancing Youth Project
BSTVSE	Bureau of Science, Technical, Vocational and Special Education
BWI	Booker Washington Institute
CARI	Center of Agriculture Research Institute
CAHW	Community Animal Health Worker
CBF	County Based Facilitator
CILSS	Permanent Interstates Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel
CoE	Center of Excellence
CYNP	Community Youth Network Program
DAI	Development Alternatives Inc.
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECREP	Evangelical Children Rehabilitation Program
EMMP	Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan
EO	Extension Officer
FtF	Feed the Future
FUN	Farmer Union Network
GBCC	Grand Bassa Community College
GCAP	Green Coast Agricultural Program
GPS	Global Positioning Systems
IBEX	Investing in Business Expansion Liberia
IFDC	International Fertilizer Developmental Center
IITA	International Institute for Tropical Agriculture
IP	Implementing Partner
IQC	Indefinite Quantity Contract
KRTTI	Kakata Rural Teachers Training Institute
LABEE IPG	Liberia Agriculture Business Enabling Environment Inter-Agency Policy Group
LAUNCH	Liberia Agriculture, Upgrading Nutrition & Child Health
LCCC	Lofa County Community College
LIFE	Livelihood Improvement for Farming Enterprises

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LIPAS	Liberia Integrated Professional Agriculture Service
LMEP	Liberia Monitoring and Evaluation Program
LNGO	Local Non-Governmental Organization
MFI	Micro Finance Institution
MIS	Market Information Systems
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoCI	Ministry of Commerce and Industry
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoP	Muriate of Potash
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
NDA	National Diploma in Agriculture
NCCC	Nimba County Community College
NIC	National Investment Commission
PERSUAP	Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan
PIDS	Performance Indicator Database System
PMP	Performance Management Plan
PUA	Peri-Urban Agriculture
R&RF	Rights & Rice Foundation
RFTOP	Requests for task order proposals
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
TAMIS	Technical Administrative Management Information System
TSP	Triple Super-Phosphate
TVET	Technical, Vocational Education and Training
UDP	Urea Deep Placement
UL	University of Liberia
USADF	United States African Development Foundation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VET GOV	Veterinary Governance in Africa
WAAPP	West Africa Agriculture Productivity Program
WAFP	West Africa Fertilizer Project
WASP	West Africa Seed Project
WFP	World Food Program

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Background

The USAID Food and Enterprise Development (FED) Program for Liberia is a USAID-funded development program that was launched in September 2011. USAID FED uses an all-inclusive strategy incorporating MSME farmers, processors, suppliers, women, and youth while partnering with the government of Liberia and local civil societies to achieve food security.

The goal of USAID FED is to increase food availability, utilization, and accessibility by building an indigenous incentive structure that assists agricultural stakeholders in adopting commercial approaches.

This incentive structure is built upon:

- Improved technology for productivity and profitability
- Expanded and modernized input supply and extension systems
- Commercial production, marketing, and processing
- Enterprise services
- Workforce development

USAID FED works with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), civil societies and the private sector in providing communities access to agricultural inputs, extension services, nutrition messages, processing services, market information, transportation, credit, agro-business education, training, and business development services.

In five years, USAID FED's thrust to expand market linkages is expected to lead to substantial increases in income and job opportunities. USAID FED aims to significantly boost the production, processing, marketing and nutritional utilization of rice, cassava and vegetables, and to enhance the productivity of goat farming in the counties covered by the program.

These initiatives are being carried out in Bong, Lofa, Nimba, Grand Bassa, Montserrado, and Margibi counties. USAID FED focuses on these counties because they are situated along regional development corridors that are crucial in promoting intra and inter-county commerce. These growth corridors are expected to improve food availability and access for all Liberians.

USAID FED's methodology is market-led and value chain-driven; it is committed to developing indigenous capacity building, with a specific focus on Liberia's women and youth.

USAID FED is implemented by five partners: Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI), Winrock International, International Fertilizer Developmental Center (IFDC), Louisiana State University (LSU), and The Cadmus Group.

Executive Summary

During the period, USAID FED signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) with Lofa County Community College (LCCC), Nimba County Community College (NCCC) and Grand Bassa Community College (GBCC). According to the MoUs, USAID FED will support the CoEs to establish enterprises that will generate additional revenues to be used for the up-keep of the facilities and equipment that the program will put in place. The enterprises will also serve as avenues for practical on-farm exercises for students enrolled under the NDA program.

USAID FED delivered the second rice mill line to Fabrar Liberia's processing facility in Kakata. Fabrar Liberia installed two rice mill lines and started processing paddy rice in stock. The inauguration of the facility was expected to take place during the month of August, but was postponed due to the current Ebola crisis.

During the month of August, 2,000 bags of surplus rice valued at \$38,000 USD were verified in Lofa County for sale to Fabrar Liberia. In addition, 750 bags of surplus rice valued at \$13,500 USD were verified in Nimba County. It is anticipated that Fabrar Liberia will procure the surplus rice during the month of September, as the need for locally produced rice increases due to shortages emerging as a result of the Ebola crisis.

USAID FED conducted a vegetable market assessment exercise in Grand Bassa County to identify and map out additional markets for the sales of vegetables in FY15. The assessment revealed seven potential markets along the Montserrado and Grand Bassa corridor that are trading predominately in cucumber, eggplant and okra. USAID FED vegetable clusters can consider these markets for future sales of vegetables.

In the reporting period, USAID FED began vegetable seed trials on lettuce, hot pepper, African eggplant, bitter ball and tomatoes at Mawah Cluster in Montserrado County. The seeds were sown in a nursery in August and will be transplanted to the fields in September. The trials will assist the vegetable value chain make conclusions on each vegetable's performance.

USAID FED also produced a video on nutrition titled "*Healthy Foods for Pregnant Women and Children*" which will serve as a visual reinforcement of the importance of diversified nutrition during nutrition training and other presentations.

USAID FED Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) and extension aides ear tagged a total of 83 goats at seven FY13 goat production sites, and 14 goats at one FY14 goat production site in Grand Bassa County (Figure 7). The ear tagging process continues in the remaining counties in September.

Ear tagging of goats is a useful tool to identify and record performance of goats under improved management practices.

By the end of August, 2,398.82 ha of upland rice were planted at the 224 FED sites. All counties exceeded targets for area cultivation of upland rice. The farmers will spend September weeding and caring for their respective rice fields. Some of the farms that planted rice crop much earlier are now experiencing panicle initiation.

USAID FED completed the evaluation of 15 micro and small processors regarding their equipment requirements. USAID FED also conducted a total of 16 micro and small processors building inspections.

During FY15, 27 county-based micro-processors and three Monrovia-based small processors will be assisted to upgrade processing capacities and enable them to operate profitably.

Component One: Increase Agricultural Productivity and Profitability

Task 1A: Increased Production and Profitability of the Rice Value Chain

FY13 Rice Crop Sales

During the month of August, a total of 75.7MT of the FY13 rice paddy crop was sold for \$38,641.29 USD. In total, 1,089.99 MT of FY13 paddy rice valued at \$458,747.93 USD has been sold during FY14 (Table 1).

Table 1: FY13 Rice crop sales in August of FY14.

County	August Sales Volume (MT)	August Sales Value (US\$)	Total Rice Sales Volume YTD (MT)	Total Rice Sales Value YTD (US\$)
Lofa	0	0	169.27	66,758.94
Nimba	74.60	38,185.29	184.85	97,596.99
Bong	1.10	456.00	734.37	293,792.00
Grand Bassa	0	0	1.50	600.00
TOTAL	75.7	38,641.29	1,089.99	458,747.93

FY14 Lowland Rice Farmers

By the end of August, USAID FED supported 10,794 lowland rice farmers from 191 groups across the four counties. Of the total, 5,652 are men and 5,142 are women (Table 2).

Table 2: FY14 Lowland rice production groups.

County	# Groups Recruited for FY14 Production	# of Farmers FY14 Targets	Total # of Farmers Recruited YTD	# of Male Farmers	# of Female Farmers
Lofa	44	2,058	2,680	1,280	1,400
Nimba	75	4,434	4,672	2,603	2,069
Bong	58	2,130	3,092	1,574	1,518
Grand Bassa	14	350	350	195	155
Total	191	8,972	10,794	5,652	5,142

FY14 Lowland Rice Planting

During the month of August, a total of 1,181.52 ha of lowland rice fields were transplanted in counties, compared to the FY14 target of 1,356 ha (Table 3). 245.20 ha is expected to be transplanted by the end of September. The remaining expected to be transplanted by the end of September is due to delays in the procurement of other inputs. To prevent similar delays in the future, the FY15 program implementation will start in September. In FY14, it started in November.



Figure 1: Transplanted fields at Garmu # 1 seed multiplication site, Panta District, Bong County.

August, a total of lowland rice fields the four rice target to the FY14 target of The remaining expected to be end of September delayed transplanting the procurement of other inputs. To delays in the future, implementation will In FY14, it started in

Table 3: FY14 Lowland preparation by county

County	Target Sites for FY14	Total Sites Identified YTD	Ha Targeted for FY14	Total Ha Transplanted as of August	Total Ha to be Transplanted
Lofa	40	44	150	85	85
Nimba	72	75	405	381.32	101.9
Bong	32	58	757	704	44.5
Grand Bassa	14	28	44	11.2	13.8
TOTAL	158	205	1,356	1,181.52	245.2

FY14 Upland Rice Productivity

By the end of August, USAID FED supported a total of 8,595 upland farmers (5,342 male and 3,253 female) (Table 4). While the number of upland rice farmers falls below the FY14 target, the total number of rice beneficiaries, 19,389 farmers, exceeds the FY14 target of 19,149.

Table 4: FY14 Upland rice production groups

County	Groups Recruited for FY14 Production	FY14 Farmer Recruitment Target	Total # of Farmers Recruited YTD	# of Male Farmers	# of Female Farmers
Lofa	33	3,600	2,478	1,137	1,341
Nimba	37	2,385	2,385	1,432	953
Bong	85	3,667	3,207	2,337	870

Grand Bassa	51	525	525	436	89
TOTAL	206	10,177	8,595	5,342	3,253

FY14 Upland Rice Cultivation

By the end of August, 2,398.82 ha of upland rice were planted at the 224 identified sites. All counties exceeded targets for area cultivation of upland rice (Table 5). The farmers will spend September weeding and caring for their respective rice fields. Some of the farms that planted rice crop much earlier are now experiencing panicle initiation.

Table 5: FY14 Upland rice cultivation by county.

County	Target Sites for FY14	Identified Sites for FY14	Target Ha FY14	Ha Cleared and Planted in August FY14	Total Ha Cleared and Planted YTD
Lofa	65	46	129	0	140
Nimba	43	37	90.2	0	95.32
Bong	66	85	1,600	53.5	1,673.5
Grand Bassa	10	56	44	0	490
TOTAL	184	224	1,863.2	53.5	2,398.82

FY15 Beneficiary Identification

FY15 Upland rice beneficiary identification

By the end of August, USAID FED identified 3,375 upland farmers (2,025 male and 1,350 female) in Nimba, Bong and Grand Bassa counties (Table 6). FY15 beneficiary recruitment will continue in September 2014.

Table 6: Identified FY15 upland rice production groups.

County	FY15 Farmer Recruitment Target	Groups Recruited for FY15 Production	Total # of Farmers Recruited as of August	# of Male Farmers	# of Female Farmers
Lofa	5,000	0	0	0	0
Nimba	6,500	11	1,625	975	650
Bong	5,800	13	1,450	870	580
Grand Bassa	1,200	6	300	180	120
TOTAL	18,500	30	3,375	2,025	1,350

FY15 Upland Rice Site Selection

By the end of August, a total of 940 ha of upland sites were identified against a target of 4,970 sites for FY15. The identified sites represent **940 ha** of upland had been identified against a proposed target of **4,970 ha** (Table 7). Site identification for FY15 will continue in September of 2014.

Table 7: FY15 identified upland rice sites by county

County	Target Ha FY15	Ha Identified by August	Total Ha identified (YTD)
Lofa	1,210	0	0
Nimba	260	65	65
Bong	2,900	725	725
Grand Bassa	600	150	150
TOTAL	4,970	940	940

FY15 Lowland Rice Beneficiary Identification:

By the end of August, USAID FED identified a total of 1,710 lowland beneficiaries against a proposed target of 12,550 new beneficiaries for FY15 (Table 8). FY15 beneficiary identification will continue in September of 2014.

Table 8: FY15 lowland rice production groups.

County	FY15 Farmer Recruitment Target	Total # of Farmers Recruited as of August	# of Male Farmers	# of Female Farmers
Lofa	4,000	0	0	0
Nimba	5,800	1,160	696	464
Bong	2,000	400	240	160
Grand Bassa	750	150	90	60
TOTAL	12,550	1,710	1,026	684

FY15 Lowland rice site identification

By the end of August, a total of 452 ha of lowland rice against a proposed target of 3,260 ha were identified across the counties (Table 9). The identification of lowland sites for FY15 will continue in September of 2014 through USAID FED extension staff working in tandem with the Monrovia-based team to identify potential lowland swamp farms.

Table 9: FY15 Identified lowland rice sites by county.

County	Target Ha FY15	Sites Identified Ha by August	Ha Identified by August	Total Sites Identified YTD	Total Ha Identified YTD
Lofa	1,000	0	0	0	0
Nimba	1,160	232	232	232	232
Bong	1,000	200	200	200	200
Grand Bassa	100	20	20	20	20
TOTAL	3,260	452	452	452	452

Construction of Water Management Infrastructure

During the month of August, USAID FED identified six new sites representing a total of 55 ha (25 ha on three sites in Bong county and 30 ha on three sites in Nimba county) for the development and expansion of additional water management structures during the FY15 period.

In July, USAID FED completed the construction of 12 spillways (4 in Lofa, 4 in Bong and 4 in Nimba) and verified their functionality with Tallobenku Construction Company (Figure 2). The improved water management infrastructure systems will allow farmers to plant a second crop after the rainy season, giving them two crops each year.



Figure 2: Completed spillway at Karmei Farm, Sanniquelle Mah District, Nimba County.

Community Rice Business Hubs

By the end of August, the construction of eight rice business hubs across the four counties (3 in Nimba, 3 in Lofa, 1 in Grand Bassa and 1 in Bong) were completed.

The construction of two rice business hubs in Bong County will be completed in September, while the rice business hubs in Nimba County have been fully equipped and inaugurated. The rice business hubs will be fully equipped and operational by the end of September, with the exception of Bong which is expected to start in October (Table 10). Furthermore, USAID FED identified six new, potential locations (3 in Bong and 3 in Nimba) to establish rice business hubs in FY15.

Table 10: FY14 rice business hub status by county

County	# of Hubs (Location)	Construction	Equipment Status	Overall Status	Inauguration Status
Nimba	3 (Doumpa, Payee & Boweh)	Completed	Fully equipped	Operational	Inaugurated
Lofa	3 (David Selma Town, Foya & Serkonnedu)	Completed	Equipment delivered for installation	Operations expected to start in September	TBD in early October
Grand Bassa	1 (Kpelleh Town)	Completed	Equipment delivered for installation	Operations expected to start in September	TBD in October
Bong	3 (Garmue, Totota & Bongmines)	1 completed; 2 to be completed by end of September	Equipment delivered to Bong	Operations expected to start in October	TBD in October

In addition to the provision of mechanized services to rice farmers in the clusters, rice business hubs will also serve as aggregation centers for rice trading with large buyers such as Fabrar Liberia (Figure 3).

Support to Rice Processing

During the month of August, USAID FED delivered the rice mill equipment to Fabrar Liberia's processing facility in Kakata. Fabrar Liberia now has two rice mill lines installed and has already started processing paddy rice. The inauguration of the facility was expected to take place during the month of August, but was postponed due to the current Ebola crisis.



USAID Food and Enterprise I Monthly Rep Figure 3: Completed rice processing center in Foya, Lofa County.

During the same period, Fabrar Liberia supplied 100 bags of processed rice valued at \$3,500 USD to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) as part of the annual procurement of rice by the Government for distribution to its employees.

Fabrar Liberia is currently negotiating to supply milled rice to the World Food Program (WFP). This market opportunity may be possible as WFP and other agencies plan for humanitarian assistance to communities affected by the Ebola crisis.

Market access for rice producers

During the month of August, 2,000 bags of surplus rice valued at \$38,000 USD were verified in Lofa County for sale to Fabrar Liberia. In addition, 750 bags of surplus rice valued at \$13,500 USD were verified in Nimba County. It is anticipated that Fabrar Liberia will procure the surplus rice during the month of September as the need for locally produced rice increases due to shortages emerging as a result of the Ebola crisis.

Task 1B: Increased Production and Profitability of the Cassava Value Chain

FY14 Cassava Crop Land Preparation and Planting

In August, a total of 25 ha were prepared, while 364 ha were planted for FY14 crop production across the four counties (Table 11).

Table 11: Cassava land preparation and planting in August FY14

County	Land Preparation FY14 Targets (ha)	Total Ha Prepared in August	Total Ha planted in August	Total Ha prepared YTD	Total Ha planted YTD
Nimba	840	0	339	752.6	780.9
Grand Bassa	630	0	0	900	630
Bong	420	0	0	469	432
Lofa	210	25	25	235	250.1
Total	2,100	25	364	2,357	2,093

FY13 Cassava Tuber Harvests and Sales

During the month of August, a total of 173.77 MT of raw cassava tubers from the FY13 crop were harvested and sold for \$19,286.71 USD (Table 12). In total, 326.68 MT of cassava tubers have been harvested and sold for \$27,411.25 USD during FY14. Cassava harvesting is expected through November.

Table 12: Cassava harvest and crop sales in August

County	FY14 Production Targets, Raw Tuber (MT)	Volume of Raw Tuber Harvested in August (MT)	Sales Value in August (USD)	Volume of Raw Tuber Harvested YTD (MT)	Sales Value Raw Tuber YTD (USD)
Nimba	2,130	140.75	13,155.71	213	19,897.25

Grand Bassa	1,598	23.7	5,359.00	48.5	6,385.00
Bong	1,065	3.8	527	44.64	595.00
Lofa	532	5.52	245	20.54	534.00
Total	5,325	173.77	19,286.71	326.68	27,411.25

Screening of Improved Cassava Varieties

During the reporting period, USAID FED conducted the second weeding of over 34,600 cassava cuttings at the control screening sites in Voinjama, Lofa County (Figure 4).

The cuttings are part of the 11 improved varieties imported from the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in Q3 FY14.

Cassava Nursery Establishment

By the end of August, 36 nurseries were established on 54 ha towards multiplication of improved cassava cuttings. A total of 34 cassava nursery farmers were trained on nursery maintenance and production of improved planting material (Table 13). FED aims to establish a total of 40 nurseries by the end of September 2014.



Figure 4: One of the screening sites in Lofa County.

Support to Cassava Processing

USAID FED completed the evaluation of 15 micro and small processors in order to assess equipment requirements in the development of cost share budget requirements. USAID FED also conducted a total of 16 micro and small processors building inspections (Figure 5). A total of 13 additional micro-processors were evaluated in Bong and Nimba counties.

During FY15, 27 county-based micro-processors and three Monrovia-based small processors will be assisted to upgrade processing capacities and enable them to operate profitably.

As a consequence of the Ebola crisis and increase in fuel and transport costs, the Monrovia-based processors have not begun procuring any of the FY13 cassava crop. USAID FED anticipates that due to the shortage of rice, the market for cassava at the county level will increase significantly as households divert consumption to locally available cassava. Thus, the loss of the Monrovia-based cassava processors will not significantly impact FED cassava farmers as demand for this staple in the counties is high.

During the same period, USAID FED developed training manuals on business plan development, record keeping and food safety. These manuals will be used by the cassava value chain during coaching and technical assistance to the micro and small processing enterprises in FY15.

Task 1C: Increased Production and Profitability of the Goat Value Chain

Establishment of Goat Shelters

By the end of August, USAID FED has completed shelter construction in 64 out of the 84 sites planned for goat production intensification in Bong, Nimba, Lofa and Grand Bassa counties (Figure 6). USAID FED also distributed fencing, roofing, nails and other materials to the four counties. USAID FED anticipates that shelters in all 84 sites will be completed by the end of September 2014.

Goat farmer recruitment

A total of 2,060 farmers (1,260 male, 800 female) in 84 goat groups continued to receive technical assistance through extension visits in the month of August. By the end of the month, these farmers had a cumulative animal stock of 5,200 goats (Table 13).



Figure 6: Completed Goat maternity shelter, Zoedor Goat Farmer Association, Nimba County

Table 13: FY14 Goat farmer recruitment and total number of goats.

County	FY14 Farmer Target	# of Farmers Recruited for FY14	# of Male Farmers	# of Female Farmers	Total # of Goats YTD FY14	# Does	# Bucks	# Kids



Figure 5: Karnpaly Rural Women processors at Karnplay, Nimba County.

Nimba	600	693	341	296	826	527	140	159
Grand Bassa	180	275	166	111	815	452	184	179
Bong	500	596	493	179	1954	1,297	388	269
Lofa	400	496	260	214	1605	1083	148	374
Total	1680	2060	1,260	800	5,200	3,359	860	981

Kidding rates

During the month of August, a total of 388 new kids (143 male and 245 female) were recorded in a total of 69 communities. Six of these communities belong to FY13 groups and 63 were from new goat production intensification sites.

Goat sales

In August, a total of 224 goats (146 bucks and 78 does) were sold for a total cumulative value of \$18,003 USD in Bong, Nimba, Lofa and Grand Bassa counties. In total, 1,452 goats valued at \$92,256 USD have been sold during FY14 (Table 14).

Table 14: Goat sales in August and FY14.

County	# of Goats Sold in August	Total Value of Goats Sold in August (USD)	# of Goats Sold YTD	Total Value of Goats Sold YTD (USD)
Nimba	20	\$ 1,365.00	118	\$8,170.00
Grand Bassa	9	\$ 575.00	175	\$11,130.00
Bong	165	\$ 13,425.00	685	\$49,525.00
Lofa	30	\$ 2,638.00	474	\$23,431.00
Total	224	\$ 18,003.00	1452	\$92,256.00

Goat Ear Tagging



USAID FED Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) and extension aids ear tagged a total of 83 goats at seven FY13 goat production sites and 14 goats at one FY14 goat production site in Grand Bassa County (Figure 7). The ear tagging process continues in the remaining counties in September.

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Figure 7: Patricial Mason and farmers tag the ear of a goat at Neorpeh, Grand Bassa County

Ear tagging of goats is a useful tool to identify and record performance of goats under improved management practices.

USAID/USDA Collaboration

USAID FED distributed 30 imported bucks to 15 goat production sites in Nimba County.

These bucks came from the first batch of 209 goats imported from Guinea under the USDA/Land O' Lakes development project.



Figure 8: Local Goat Traders in a meeting in the Office of the Vice president of the Bong County Marketing Association.

Goat Marketing Events

In order to bridge the gap between goat traders and USAID FED supported goat producers, a meeting was held in Bong County between traders and local authorities to plan for goat marketing events (Figure 8). Marketing events are anticipated to commence in Bong in the month of October. Similar exercises will also be conducted in Nimba, Lofa and Grand Bassa.

Task 1D: Increased Productivity and Profitability of Vegetable Value Chain

Vegetable Sales

During the reporting period, a total of 379 vegetable farmers (267 male, 112 female) in 21 clusters in Montserrado, Margibi, Grand Bassa and Nimba counties received extension support in land preparation, field layout, nursery construction and field maintenance for wet season production on 116.23 ha of land.



Figure 9: Trial seedling in a nursery at Mawah Cluster, Montserrado County

Improved Seed Varieties

In this reporting period, USAID FED began vegetable seed trials on lettuce, hot pepper, African eggplant, bitter ball and tomatoes at Mawah Cluster in Montserrado County.

The seeds were sown in a nursery in August, and will be transplanted to the fields in September (Figure 9).

Cucumber and okra seeds were directly seeded in open fields and showed an 88% germination rate, but died off as a result of waterlogging due to heavy rains. White flies have also been observed during the trials.

Identification of FY15 production clusters

During the month of August, USAID FED identified 10 vegetable clusters in Margibi County with a total of 193 farmers (125 male, 68 female). These farmers cultivate both local and exotic vegetables on 30 ha of land (Table 15).

Table 15: FY15 identified beneficiaries

No	County	Community	Number of clusters	Number of beneficiaries	Hectares

				Male	Female	Total	
1	Margibi	Cinta	Cinta Vegetable cluster	15	5	20	3
2	Margibi	Mano Camp	United Farmers cluster	14	6	20	3
3	Margibi	Blumu	Kwagei vegetables farmers	13	7	20	3
4	Margibi	Gorglas	Gorglas town cluster	9	11	20	4
5	Margibi	Lowar ta	Lowar ta cluster	15	5	20	3
6	Margibi	Mary Farm	Mighty Blessings Untied farmers cluster	12	8	20	3
7	Margibi	Fallah Camp	Kukaitonor vegetable farmers	12	8	20	3
8	Margibi	Bablama	Malongai Farmers Association	14	6	20	4
9	Margibi	Millier Village	Miller Village cluster	9	8	17	2
10	Margibi	Compound 2	Help yourself Agricultural Project	12	4	16	2
Total				125	68	193	30

Integrated Pest Management

During the reporting period, USAID FED continued to monitor pest and disease prevalence at the 21 FY14 clusters.

USAID FED developed extension materials on both food safety and the safe use of plant protection products. These materials will be used for training and extension work in FY15.

Vegetable Sales

During the month of August, FY14 vegetable clusters harvested a total of 24.32 MT of vegetables valued at \$8,376.22 USD (Table 16). In total, the vegetable clusters have harvested 73.46 MT of vegetables valued at \$46,882.80 USD in FY14.

Table 16: Vegetable sales for clusters August 2014

County/Cluster	Volume of Sales in August (kg)	Total Value of Sales in August (USD)	Volume of Sales YTD (kg)	Total Value of Sales YTD
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				(USD)
Montserrado				
Bokays Town	510	208.60	2,567.3	1,829.36
CGCWEP Vegetables	2,370.6	483.29	6,951.5	3,878.99
Central White Plane	840	356.22	3345	1,394.72
Low Cost Village	627	375.00	2,676.5	2,333.18
Kollieman Town	212	139.63	698	253.63
Mawah Farmers Association	2,302	1,050.30	7,074	8,202.18
Mulleh Farm	615	173.17	6860	7,064.93
Sub Total	7,476.6	2,786.22	30,172.3	24,957.00
Nimba				
Yekepa	0	0	2,243.7	3,876.84
Sanniquelleh	0	0	4,232	735.94
Ganta	0	0	1,714	1,493.18
Gbedin	0	0	2,835	1,479.30
Sub Total	0	0	11,024.7	7,585.26
Margibi				
Kpoyea's Town	1,824	536.10	2,493	781.98
Joeblow Town	3,648	893.29	3,869	1,043.47
Kollie Kan Ta	425	15.85	4,325	1,949.85
Francis Lewis	5,484.6	2,129.27	7,069.6	2,806.62
Weala	1,937	498.78	5,519.5	3,113.02
Nyanka Ta	3,103	1,131.10	5,343	1,968.16
Gbofellah	223	186.59	1,309	689.30
Horton Farm	0	0	1,494	1,121.94
Sub Total	16,644.6	5,390.98	31,422.1	13,474.34
Grand Bassa				
Tubmanville	4	6.34	440.87	480.40
New Buchanan	193	192.68	398	385.80
Sub Total	197	199.02	838.87	866.20
Total	24,318.2	8,376.22	73,457.97	46,882.80

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The Monrovia Vegetable Marketing Association traded 17 MT of vegetables valued at \$24,867 USD during the month of August. FY13 groups supported with Village Savings and Loan activities traded a total of 9.8 MT of vegetables valued at \$3,357 USD (Table 17).

Table 17: Vegetable sales for associations and VSLA groups

Group	Volume Sold in August (kg)	Value Traded in August (USD)	Volume Sold YTD (kg)	Value Traded YTD (USD)
Monrovia Vegetable Marketing Association	17000	24,867.00	35,549	40,339.30
Kukutona (FY13 VSLA Group)	9,800.00	3,357.00	9,800	3,357.00
United Farmers Association (FY13 VSLA Group)	0	0	28,350	14,959.38
Zoedoar Farmers Association (FY13 VSLA Group)	0	0	57,450	10,761.25
Menlehkoyee (FY13 VSLA Group)	0	0	21,000	6,085.00
TOTAL	26,800	28,224	152,149	75,502

Supporting Market Linkages

USAID FED distributed a total of 65 vegetable crates for aggregating and transporting vegetables to 15 members of the Monrovia Vegetable Sellers Association. These crates will assist traders in reducing post-harvest losses when vegetables are transported from the clusters to the markets (Figure 10).

USAID FED conducted a vegetable market assessment exercise in Grand Bassa County to identify and map out additional markets for the sales of vegetables in FY15. The assessment revealed seven potential markets along the Montserrado and Grand Bassa corridor that are trading predominately in cucumber, eggplant and okra. USAID FED vegetable clusters can consider these markets for future sales of vegetables.



Figure 10: Monrovia Vegetable Marketing Association receiving crates.

Subtask 1.1: Special Studies and MoA Data Collection System Developed

Nutrition Survey

USAID FED administered two nutrition surveys in Bong, Nimba, Lofa, Montserrado and Margibi counties ascertain how many project beneficiaries received nutrition messages in FY14. One nutrition survey targeted Extension Staff and Lead Farmers (115 respondents) while the other targeted only Farmers (1,150 respondents). The data is at analysis stage.

Subtask 1.2: Improve Access to Agriculture Inputs

UDP sites selection & preparation

Urea Deep Placement (UDP) and Systems of Rice Intensification (SRI):

USAID-FED carried out assessment of water availability in the initial sites selected for the UDP-SRI field trials. Observations from four sites in Bong showed that they will be better choices for UDP-SRI technology trials in the dry season as compared to the site in Nimba. The site in Nimba will be replaced because the site does not have water all year round. Based on these observations, USAID FED will maintain the four sites in Bong County for FY15. Five additional sites (3 in Nimba and 2 in Lofa) will be identified for FY15, bringing the total of UDP-SRI sites for FY15 to 10.

Subtask 1.3: Agricultural Extension Support

Extension Support to Nutrition messaging

USAID FED developed a nutrition poster that will be distributed to at least 2,000 farmers participating in the four value chains. The poster specifically promotes diet diversification with emphasis on provision of animal protein and micro-nutrient rich foods to be given to pregnant women and children.



USAID FED also produced a video on nutrition titled “*Healthy Foods for Pregnant Women and Children*” which will serve as a visual reinforcement of the importance of diversified nutrition. This video will be used during nutrition training and other presentations.

USAID FED extension supported the USAID Nutrition Officer in delivering a Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop on the importance

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Figure 11: VSLA Chairladies listening to Ebola messaging delivered by Nimba County Manager during Nutrition TOT

of diversified nutrition to 100 chairladies from VSLAs in Nimba, Bong, Margibi and Grand Bassa counties. The ToT participants are expected to, in turn, train members of the VSLA groups (Figure 11).

Development of Agriculture Radio Programs

USAID FED, in partnership with the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) Radio, produced and aired the first farm radio program entitled, “*On the Farm*”. The program was scripted and produced by the USAID FED Extension and Communication teams. USAID FED currently has two 30 minute radio slots every month on UNMIL Radio FM 91.5.

Dissemination of Ebola Related Messaging

USAID FED received 200 Ebola messaging posters from the Liberian Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW) for onward distribution to field extension officers and extension aides. USAID FED also received a script of Ebola messages in Liberian English. The purpose is for the USAID FED extension officers to display these posters within USAID FED-supported communities as part of the campaign to raise awareness on the Ebola disease.

Development of Extension Material

USAID FED received extension material from the rice and vegetable value chain STTAs (Dr. Pandian Balamurugan and Emmanuel Owusu), including a lowland rice production manual, upland rice production manual, UDP-SRI manual and an SRI Field Training Manual.

A total of eight draft horticulture crop production manuals were also finished by Emmanuel Owusu. All draft manuals are currently being revised and repackaged for validation.

Component Two: Stimulate Private Sector Growth and Investment

Task 2: Enabling Policy Environment for Private Sector Growth

Policy Reform Activities

Due to the Ebola crisis and the limited in-country availability of both USAID FED and partner staff, operations of the technical working groups have been suspended until further notice. This includes the Liberia Agriculture Business Enabling Environment Inter-agency Policy Group (LABEE IPG) and the technical working group to be established to push forward the seed certification processes.

USAID FED is recruiting a law firm (locally and internationally) to translate the National Seed Policy and National Plant Protection Policy and Regulatory framework into statutory language for submission to the National Legislature. A final selection will be made in September.

National Standards Laboratory

USAID FED has put the recruitment of consultants on hold to develop a small market study and business plan and phased road map towards accreditation. The business plan will inform donors and potential investors of the capital and operational investments required and of the feasibility of self-sustaining operations for lab services. The consultancy will possibly commence in January 2015.

Subtask 2.1: Access to Credit and Business Development Services

Since Q4 of 2013, USAID FED has supported the creation of 123 Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) for 3,400 farmers (mostly women). Through the month of August 2014, the VSLA groups have generated access to capital for investment in agricultural activities in the amount of \$150,196 USD.

VSLAs that have 'graduated' and shared out after the first cycle are eligible to apply for loans from the Central Bank's Loan Extension and Availability Facility (LEAF). The loans, which are typically three years with quarterly payments at 3% annual interest rate, will be used by the VSLAs for on-lending to their members.

The Central Bank of Liberia facilitated the creation of The National Association of Village Savings and Loan Association (NAPEX) to streamline the application process. NAPEX has elected leadership structures from a base of existing VSLAs at the national, county and district levels throughout the 15 counties.

NAPEX is intended to enhance the delivery of information among member VSLAs in a coordinated fashion, provide the opportunity for feedback on the implementation of activities, and help the Central Bank improve risk management by assisting in loan origination due diligence and the repayment process. All VSLAs wishing to apply for loans through LEAF will be required to register with NAPEX.

During the month of August, USAID FED worked with the Central Bank and NAPEX to register the projects' best VSLA groups to benefit from the LEAF program. To date, three groups from Lofa and one group from Nimba have registered with NAPEX at the county level. The registration fee is \$360 LD per member (or \$10,800 LD per 30-member group). According to the Central Bank, over 1,000 groups have already applied for loans, but not all have registered with NAPEX. Loan award decisions are expected to be made by October 2014.

Extension of Micro Financing to Farmers

In FY14, Liberia Entrepreneurial & Asset Development (LEAD), a local MFI, has signed loan agreements totaling \$35,773 USD for individual vegetable farmers in Montserrado, Margibi and Nimba counties who were part of FY13 demonstration plots. Loan repayment amounts are inclusive of 16% interest.

Through the month of August, five groups paid their loans as a result of successful sales of vegetables for \$3,747,800 LD (\$44,235 USD), while other groups have made partial payments (Table 13). Due to the successful payoff rate, LEAD continues to disburse loans to USAID FED farmers. In August, the United Farmer's Association received another \$419,890 LD (\$4,614 USD) in loans.

Table 18: Loans and associated sales as of August 2014.

Group	Loan Principal (USD)	Loan + Interest (USD)	Amount Repaid (USD)	Associated Sales (USD)	Maturity
United Farmers	\$2,630	\$3,131	\$3,131	\$14,247	May 2014

Association (UFA)					
Zoedoar	\$5,229	\$6,225	\$6,225	\$10,249	May 2014
Menlehkoyee	\$2,614	\$3,112	\$3,112	\$5,795	May 2014
Money In the Bush	\$1,882	\$2,241	\$2,241	\$10,919	May 2014
Kukatnonon	\$1,559	\$1,856	\$1,856	\$3,025	June 2014
Kuwikai	\$1,559	\$1,856	\$1,135	TBD	June 2014
Welekema	\$1,559	\$1,856	\$309	TBD	June 2014
Cinta Horton	\$137	\$163	0	TBD	Sep 2014
Kollie Kan Ta	\$137	\$163	0	TBD	Sep 2014
Weala	\$137	\$163	0	TBD	Sep 2014
Kpoya	\$137	\$163	0	TBD	Sep 2014
Zoedoar (#2)	\$9,545	\$11,364	0	TBD	Dec 2014
Menlehkoyee (#2)	\$4,773	\$5,682	0	TBD	Dec 2014
UFA (#2)	\$3,876	\$4,614	0	TBD	Dec 2014
Total USD*	\$35,773	\$42,587	\$18,010	\$44,235	
FY14 Targets	\$89,736				

**Loan and repayment amounts based on exchange rate at the time of the loan which ranges from \$80-\$91 LD / \$1 USD*

*** Sales based on exchange rates at time of sale which ranges from \$84-\$91 LD / \$1 USD.*

Table 19: Total loans in USD accessed by farmers through VSLA, LEAD and Embedded Financing to date.

Type	Q1	Q2	Q3	July	August	Total
LEAD	\$17,033	0	\$14,318	0	\$3,876	\$35,773
VSLA	\$20,308	\$12,048	\$58,314	\$27,813	\$30,849	\$150,196
Embedded	0	0	\$56,320	0		\$56,320
Total	\$37,341	\$12,048	\$128,952	\$27,820	\$34,725	\$242,289
FY14 Targets						\$327,000

USAID FED conferred with LEAD management and representatives from the US African Development Fund (USADF) to determine the feasibility and sustainability of LEAD expanding their farming lending program to include additional USAID FED farmers and expand into Lofa County. Based on an analysis of projections conducted by LEAD and audited by USADF and USAID FED, USADF has approved an additional grant for on-lending in agriculture to LEAD for \$245,000 USD. In September, USAID FED will begin working with LEAD to disburse new loans. As part of the FY15 workplan, USAID FED will support LEAD with the provision of motorbikes, training for new employees in financial accounting software and the pilot use of mobile money to facilitate field transactions.

Business Training and Mentorship to Access Finance

USAID FED worked with IBEX to plan the training and official graduation ceremonies for 20 VSLA groups in Grand Bassa, Bong, Lofa and Bong counties for the month of August. USAID FED invited Ecobank, IB Bank, Afriland Bank, LEAD, Microlead (micro-credit union project), and the Central Bank to participate in the events. Training will follow the graduation ceremonies. However, due to the Ebola outbreak, graduation ceremonies were postponed. Ceremonies and training programs will resume once the situation is under control.

Topics to be covered include:

1. VSLAs as informal financial service providers for micro-agribusinesses
2. Agri-business investment
3. Requirements and strategies for accessing credit
4. Basic record keeping for small businesses
5. Options for VSLA expansion

Component Three: Build Local Technical and Managerial Human Resource Capability

Task 3.0 Develop Existing Vocational Centers into Centers of Excellence in Vocational Agriculture Education (CoE)

During the period, USAID FED signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with LCCC, NCCC and GBCC (Figure 12). According to the MoUs, USAID FED will support the CoEs in establishing enterprises that will generate additional revenues to be used for the up-keep of the facilities and equipment that the program will put in place. The enterprises will also serve as avenues for practical on-farm exercises for students enrolled under the NDA program.



Figure 12: Signing MoU between USAID FED and LCCC.

For their part, the CoEs have committed to assigning appropriate personnel to run the enterprises, including a Business Manager, Marketing Officer and Farm Manager. LCCC will also provide 100% of the labor requirements for these enterprises. With guidance from USAID FED, the CoEs will carry out market research and develop business and marketing plans for each enterprise.

USAID FED will support goat and rice production at LCCC, vegetables and cassava at GBCC, and cassava and goats at NCCC. The enterprises plan to engage in production, processing and marketing of their produce.

Booker Washington Institute



Figure 13: USAID FED Staff interviews a vegetable seller at Harbel General Market, Margibi County.

USAID FED supported Booker Washington Institute (BWI) to develop a farm business plan and finalized the MoU that will ensure sustainability of USAID FED supported enterprises for the running of the NDA. The NDA will commence in the first semester of the 2014 academic school year.

BWI appointed a Marketing Manager, Business Manager, Farm Manager and nine casual laborers to support BWI's agriculture enterprises.

In the month of August, USAID FED and the BWI Marketing Manager conducted a market survey at several sites including Kakata and Harbel General Markets to identify the demand for locally grown vegetables. The market survey will guide the institution's business plan development, and the program supported demonstration farm enterprises at the institution (Figure 13).

KRTTI Farm Development

During the period, KRTTI students and a contractor group have maintained three hectares at the cassava production site (Figure 14). With the closure of the school, the agriculture labor force remains at nine. USAID FED's support for the activity will end in November 2014.

ICT Support in Library and Agriculture Department

Based on the results of a market assessment, USAID FED re-advertised a Request for Proposal for the solicitation of qualified firms to develop the Flash Web design software for the Centers of Excellence.

USAID FED advertised the opportunity in newspapers, utilizing services provided by business development INGO, Building Markets, and reaching out to firms known to have the expertise. Evaluation of the proposals will begin by September 1, 2014.

The Flash Website incorporates soft copies of reference instructional materials, publications, factsheets, videos, photos, graphics as well as other documents needed by the Centers of Excellence Vocational Agriculture Education Officer (CoEVAEO) instructors to improve the content of their courses and their teaching. Once the website and content have been uploaded in a Flash multimedia software platform, it can then be downloaded onto Flash Players so that the contents can be accessible on a wide range of computer systems and devices with no need for internet access. This is especially important in Liberia since the speed of the internet constrains the ability to access large files or video stream content. The players will be made available to CoEVAE faculty and the libraries.

Additionally, USAID FED is procuring Cisco switches and access points to restore the Nimba County Community College's internet facility.

Capacity Building for Librarians at the CoEs

USAID FED suspended the training for Centers of Excellence (CoEs) Librarians at the BWI campus due to the current Ebola outbreak. The training will resume as soon as schools reopen.

Agriculture Science Laboratories

The USAID FED-contracted architectural and engineering firm, Global Construction and Mechanical Company, submitted its first draft assessment report on the renovation of the NCCC and LCCC identified facilities for the science laboratories.

The firm is expected to provide a detailed design as well as bill of quantities for the renovation of the buildings to ensure that they are properly constructed and outfitted to house the equipment for the science laboratories. The job order is expected to be completed by end of September 2014 for the four CoEs. Renovation is planned to commence in October 2014.

Career and Internship Center

USAID FED provided 106 planks of wood to Lofa County Community College (LCCC) for the renovation of the Career and Internship Center.



Figure 14: Cassava production site at KRTTI, Margibi County.

NCCC Student Demo Farm Activities

NCCC students transplanted rice seedlings onto 12 plots, while plowing and leveling of others plots are on-going (Figure 15 and Figure 16).



Figure 15: Students preparing seedlings (Suakoko-8 variety) for transplanting, Nimba County.



Figure 16: Students transplanting rice (Suakoko-8 variety), Nimba County.

NCCC administration and Agriculture Department staff, including some volunteer students, are working on a daily basis. Student volunteers are conducting farm maintenance activities on the cassava farms.

NCCC identified trees in the Gehwee Community, 3 kilometers from the institution's main campus, to saw about 500 planks of wood. The timber will be used to construct the goat shelter for the CoE's goat enterprise.

LCCC Student Demo Farm Activities



Figure 17: LCCC student demonstration plot, Lofa County.

LCCC students transplanted rice seedlings using improved agriculture methods. A total of 175 students worked on 58 plots of lowland rice. The four people employed by LCCC to manage the farm while students are on vacation are presently carrying out field maintenance and water management work (Figure 17).

Support to Post-Graduate Students

Former USAID FED Soil Analysis Technical Officer Wooiklee Payee, a soil science graduate student at Louisiana State University (LSU), resumed classes on August 25, 2014.

Meanwhile, former USAID FED Cassava Extension Officer, Boone Harris, commenced agro-ecology and sustainable agriculture graduate studies at the same institution. Boone Harris is the second student from USAID FED project to be admitted for post-graduate studies at LSU.

Task 3.1 Enterprise Service Centers

Due to the ebola outbreak, the Senior Business Development Advisor focusing on the establishment of Enterprise Service Centers has not been available in-country. In August, USAID FED's Engineer visited the facilities of the investors selected to operate the ESCs in Bong and Grand Bassa Counties. The aim of the visit was to advise them on how to come up with a cost-effective approach to establish ESCs at their facilities. The options are: 1) build a new facility, 2) renovate an existing facility or 3) rent an existing facility that will not need renovation or needs minimal expense to renovate.

Meanwhile, in August, USAID FED received three responses to the request for expression of interest (Eol) for operators of the Nimba and Monrovia ESCs. These Eols are currently under evaluation.

Internally at USAID FED, this task has been transferred under Component 2 because access to business development support services is part of improving the business enabling environment that will stimulate private sector growth, which is the main objective of Component 2. The ESCs will be a major platform for provision of business development support services to the micro, small and medium enterprises that FED is supporting.

Component Four: Cross-Cutting Activities

Task 4.1: Gender

Leadership and Business Incubation for Women Entrepreneurs

Due to the Ebola crisis, the remaining training and graduation activities due to take place in August with women participants were postponed until further notice.

Task 4.2: Youth

Youth Agriculture Local NGOs

USAID FED partners with the following youth-led organizations: The Community Youth Network (CYNP), Green Coast Agriculture Program (G-CAP), Liberia Integrated Professional Agriculture Service (LIPAS), and Evangelical Children Rehabilitation Program (ECREP) on this component.

During the month of August, four local youth NGOs continued to provide extension services to cassava and upland rice farmers in Bong, Nimba, Lofa and Grand Bassa counties as well as supervise the 39 youth extension aids recruited in Q2 FY14.

During the month of August, only field maintenance, coaching and mentorship activities were carried out in Grand Bassa County. A total of 900 ha were planted with cassava, 180 cassava demo sites were established and 3660 cassava farmers were trained across the four districts.

In August, USAID FED mentored and coached farmers in Lofa County, while weeding has continued throughout the reporting period.

The local youth NGO LIPAS achieved a target of 140 ha against a target of 129 ha set for upland rice farms, and established 53 demonstration sites involving 2,478 recruited farmers against the target of 3,600 in Lofa County. This target was not reached because some community farmers left for employment with concession companies.

In July 2014, LIPAS established 60 cassava demonstration sites on 246 ha with the full participation of 1,200 cassava farmers using cassava best practices.

In Nimba County, ECREP supported 4,800 cassava farmers to plant 339 ha of cassava. ECREP facilitated the planting of a total of 960.05 hectares (676.21 ha improved and 283.84 ha traditional) for the FY14 period.

Over the past five months ECREP has worked and completed the planting of improved cassava varieties on 1,200 hectares of land that comprises 240 demonstration sites spread out over 123 communities within the eight districts targeted under the project.

In Bong County, USAID FED provided mentoring and coaching services while weeding continued on individual farms.

The local youth NGO, G-CAP, achieved its target of cultivating 90 ha of upland rice farms and established 51 demonstration sites within 85 communities involving 3,207 recruited farmers against the target of 3,667. The target was not reached because some of the communities' farmers left for employment with mining, rubber planting or other concession companies.

GCAP completed the establishment of 120 cassava demonstration sites on 480.6 ha with the full participation of 2,400 cassava farmers. During this reporting period, the extension team has been working with and monitoring farmers to provide mentorship and coaching where needed while weeding is also ongoing in each individual farmer's farm.

Back to School Garden Program

USAID FED handed over cutlasses, hoes, shovels, diggers, wheelbarrows, rain boots, twine and measuring tape for land preparation, together with vegetable seeds and cassava cuttings to the participating schools. The targeted schools are growing vegetables and cassava.

A total of 120 participating schools, representing 60 ha of land, have completed the establishment of their demo sites and nurseries. The Back to School Garden Program aims to train over 4,500 youth farmers in Bong, Margibi, Montserrado, Grand Bassa, Lofa and Nimba counties in improved agriculture techniques in land preparation, nurseries, transplanting, harvesting and storage.

Youth Enterprise Development

Carpenter Apprenticeship Program

The goat shelter and feeders construction training for youth neared completion in Nimba, Bong, Lofa, and Grand Bassa counties. USAID FED contracted master carpenters to train 16 youth trainees in carpentry for four months. At the end of the training, the trainees will receive a tool kit to establish their own business in their communities. The training is expected to end September 30, 2014.

Blacksmiths Apprenticeship Program

The recruitment process for the blacksmith apprentice program is nearing completion at the county level (Nimba, Bong, Grand Bassa and Lofa), and 90 day training of 16 youths is expected to start in September. Due to the Ebola, the training in Lofa County will start at a later date.

The youth will receive a blacksmith toolkit at the end of the training to help them set up shops in their communities. These young professionals will produce local farming tools and sell them at affordable prices.

Special Vegetable Projects

Zorzor Rural Teacher Training Institute (ZRTTI)

Harvesting activities continued at the Zorzor Rural Teacher Training Institute (ZRTTI) where farmers made vegetable sales worth \$50 USD in August. Corn, cucumbers, watermelons, okra, cabbage, tomatoes and eggplants were harvested and sold.

C. B. Harris Memorial School Vegetable Garden Project

In August, the school Agriculture Youth Club harvested 30 bags of corn and 10 bags of cowpeas. The youth farmers distributed the harvest amongst themselves to meet food needs at their homes. In the midst of the Ebola outbreak in the Lower Careysburg District, Montserrado County, the vegetables will be allocated to support hungry families.

Selection of FY15 beneficiaries

The identification of beneficiaries for FY15 will begin in September and run until mid–October

Task 4.3: Nutrition

Nutrition messaging through USAID FED programs

During the reporting period, 100 VSLA beneficiaries (15 male, 85 female) received direct nutrition messaging through a Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop facilitated by USAID FED. Further, the USAID FED team carried out a survey of FY14 beneficiaries to determine how many received nutrition messages from USAID FED. The survey results are expected to be available in September.

Task 4.4: Coordination with Partners

USAID FED received 200 Ebola messaging posters from the Liberian Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW) for onward distribution to field extension officers and extension aides. USAID FED also received a script of Ebola messages in Liberian English. The purpose is for the USAID FED extension officers to display these posters within USAID FED-supported communities as part of the campaign to raise awareness on the Ebola disease.

Task 4.5: Monitoring & Evaluation

USAID FED Monitoring and Evaluation finalized the budget for the annual work plan 2015/2016.

Task 4.6: Environmental Compliance

USAID FED assessed the quality of the Nimba County Rice Business Hubs for spatial and functional propriety. The quality of construction in Doumpah is compliant with internationally acceptable building standards, while the quality of construction in Payee is good in relation to construction quality in the area. However, the Boi Rice Hub structures are complete but not operational due to the lack of toolkits to service the machines.

USAID FED observed that the rice milling machine pulley belts in Payee are almost torn. USAID FED proposed the tightening of fastening bolts or installation of proper size belts to prevent the wear and tear experienced when the machine vibrates during operation.

The rice business hubs typically include a pit latrine, hand pump, drying slab and storage/processing building. The storage/processing building stores harvested rice, hosts the milling machines, provides temporary storage for milled rice, while at the same time provides space for a small business office.

The Bong rice business hubs will be completed by the end of September.

USAID FED visited the proposed Soil Laboratory site at Nimba County Community College (NCCC) to orient itself with the site and surrounding areas. USAID FED observed that the site was constructed using high quality construction and building materials and is well laid out.

Task 4.7: Communications

USAID FED Media Stories

USAID FED was featured in one media story covered by local journalists (Table 20).

Table 20: USAID FED in the news in Q3 FY14.

USAID FED News	Newspapers	Online News Outlets	Radio and Other Media
Bong Farmers Practice Improved Goat Husbandry	1	-	-
Miscellaneous Stories	-	-	-

August Success Stories

USAID approved two success stories in the month of August:

1. Leadership Program Gives Rural Women a Chance to Grow.
2. Profitable Village Savings and Loan Permits Members to Improve Crop Production.